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AMERICAN VAMPIRE

SCOTT SNYDER
RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

VERTIGO

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suggested for
mature readers

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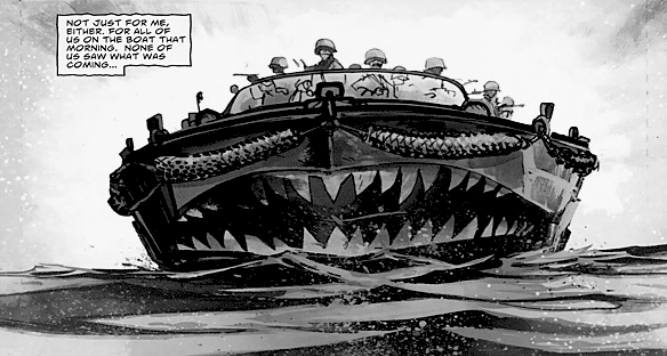
SOMETIMES YOU'RE
JUST TOO CLOSE TO
SOMETHING TO SEE
IT CLEARLY. TO SEE
IT FOR WHAT IT
REALLY IS.



IT'S LIKE YOU'VE GOT
YOUR FACE PRESSED TO
IT, AND ALL YOU CAN SEE
IS THE SMALL POINTS.
THE THINGS YOU WANT
TO SEE.



THAT'S THE WAY IT
WAS WITH THIS,
PEARL. I KNOW
THAT NOW.



NOT JUST FOR ME,
EITHER. FOR ALL OF
US ON THE BOAT THAT
MORNING. NONE OF
US SAW WHAT WAS
COMING...

...UNTIL IT
WAS TOO LATE.

THE FIVE OF US WERE MEMBERS
OF A SECRET DETAIL, PART OF AN
UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION
CALLED THE VASSALS OF THE
MORNING STAR.

WE WERE ON A COVERT MISSION TO
INVESTIGATE A SUSPECTED VAMPIRE
PRESENCE ON THE ISLAND OF TAIWAN,
AND WIPE IT OUT BEFORE AMERICAN
FORCES WERE JEOPARDIZED.

WE WERE SOLDIERS IN A SECRET WAR, A
WAR AGAINST EVIL... AND THAT MORNING,
BEFORE WE KNEW THE TRUTH, THAT
WAS ALL WE SAW--AND I CAN TELL YOU
THAT EVERY ONE OF US WAS ITCHING
FOR A FIGHT.

I THOUGHT
THE BEACH WAS
SUPPOSED TO
BE SECURE!





AS DID IF
THE ENEMY
MUST BE
MAKING A
SURPRISE
PUSH!

PERFECT
TIMING!

THERE WERE FIVE OF US IN THE PLATOON. I'D GOTTEN TO KNOW THE OTHER MEN A LITTLE BIT ON THE SHIP RIDE OVER FROM HONOLULU. SAFE TO SAY NONE OF THEM WERE BIG TALKERS.

CAPTAIN JAN MIRO, OR "THE VICAR," WAS THE LEADER OF OUR GROUP AND A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE VASSALS. FROM THE START HE DIDN'T SEEM TO LIKE ME MUCH.

WE MUST GET TO THE EAST EMBANKMENT! GO, GO, GO!

FIRST SERGEANT CALVIN POOLE, 27, OUR TAXINOMIST. SOMETHING OF A VAMPIRE EXPERT AND THE CLOSEST THING I HAD TO A FRIEND IN THE UNIT.

HENRY, YOU GOT JAPS AT YOUR SIX!

LIEUTENANT SAM LANTS, 32, OUR WEAPONS EXPERT, AND VICAR ROY'S LONGTIME RIGHT-HAND MAN, A FORMER COP FROM SAN FRANCISCO'S CHINATOWN DISTRICT.

WATCH FOR BEACH MINES! THERE'S ONE TO YOUR RIGHT, JOHNNY. THE WHITE SPHERE IN THE SAND!

AND SPECIALIST JOHN TICKMAN, JUST 21 YEARS OLD, OUR COMMUNICATIONS AND TECH MAN.

AND HERE I WAS ABOUT TO SEE IF YOU WERE UP FOR A GAME OF VOLLEYBALL, SAMMY.

MAYBE IT WAS A GOOD THING, THOUGH--GOOD THAT ALL COULD SEE WAS THE MISSION THAT MORNING.

GOD FORBID YOU TAKE THE TIME TO STEP BACK AND SEE THINGS FOR WHAT THEY ARE IN A PLACE LIKE THAT.



"...LET'S JUST SEE
WHAT YOU AND YOUR
FRIENDS ARE UP
TO..."

Grand Hawaiian Hotel, Honolulu, Hawaii.

WELL, BLOODY
WE'LL MAKE IT HAPPEN. IF
WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT
DR. PAVEL'S RESEARCH IS
TRUE, USE WHAT YOU
RECOVERED TO--

NOK
NOK

HOLD
ON A
MINUTE.

WE'VE COME
FOR YOUR BAGS,
MR. HOBBS.

YOU'RE
TEN MINUTES
EARLY...

I'LL
NEED A BIT
MORE--

ALOHA.





"...WHAT'S GOING ON?"

ACCORDING TO RELAY, THE VILLAGE SHOULD BE JUST OVER THE RIDGE.

PERSONALLY, I THINK IT SOUNDS LIKE A GOOSE CHASE. NO WAMPS CAN LIVE ON A SHIT-SPECK LIKE THIS. PROBABLY SPLIT OR STARVED OUT YEARS AGO.



FELLAS... LOOK.



DON'T GET TOO CLOSE. IT COULD BE TRIPPED.

I DON'T KNOW. IN ALL MY COMBAT TIME, I'VE NEVER SEEN A DEFENSIVE TUNNEL LEFT OUT IN THE OPEN LIKE THAT, YOU?



HENRY'S RIGHT. THAT THING ISN'T ARMY.

STILL, MOST AUSTRONESIAN SPECIES ARE HIGHLY HUMANOID. THEY LIVE LIKE PEOPLE, NOT ANIMALS IN CAVES.



WHAT DO YOU THINK, JAN, A NEST?



WHAT I THINK...



...IS THAT WE KEEP MOVING.
IF WE'RE TO REACH THE
VILLAGE BEFORE
NIGHTFALL.

HEY, VICAR! HOW
ABOUT A LITTLE
WARNING NEXT
TIME?



MAYBE YOU SHOULD
BE QUICKER ON YOUR
TOES, PRIVATE
PRESTON.

I'M
SORRY, I
DIDN'T REALIZE
I NEEDED TO
BE ON GUARD
IN MY OWN
GODDAMN
UNIT!

HENRY==

NOW I DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOUR FUCKING PROBLEM
IS WITH ME, "VICAR," AND I DON'T
CARE, BUT PERSONALLY, I'D LIKE
TO KEEP ALL MY WORKING
PARTS, UNDERSTAND?



I UNDERSTAND
VERY WELL, PRIVATE
PRESTON. BUT IF YOU
ARE REFERRING TO MY
ARM...THIS WAS NO
ACCIDENT. I CHOPPED
IT OFF. MYSELF.

NOW KEEP UP,
AND WE WILL ALL
BE--HOW DO YOU
AMERICANS PUT
IT--"HONKY
DORY."



IT'S
HUNKY DORY,
ABSOLUTE...

DON'T LET HIM GET TO YOU, MAN. YOU'RE JUST NEW TO HIM IS ALL. MOST OF US HAVE JUST RUN TOGETHER A LONG TIME. HELL, SAM AND THE VICAR HAVE DONE MORE THAN TWENTY MISSIONS SIDE BY SIDE.

TO THE VICAR, YOU'RE A LIABILITY. ALL GHOSTS ARE.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT GHOSTS? WHO'S A GHOST?



YOU ARE, MY FRIEND. THAT'S WHAT WE CALL GUYS LIKE YOU, WHO'VE STILL GOT ATTACHMENTS TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING.

WHAT? HOBBS HASN'T GIVEN YOU THE SPEECH YET?

HE'S GIVEN ME PLENTY.



NO, MAN. THE SPEECH.

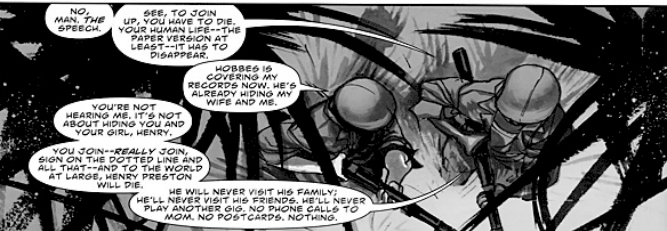
SEE, TO JOIN UP, YOU HAVE TO DIE. YOUR HUMAN LIFE--THE PAPER VERSION AT LEAST--IT HAS TO DISAPPEAR.

HOBBS IS COVERING MY RECORDS NOW. HE'S ALREADY HIDING MY WIFE AND ME.

YOU'RE NOT HEARING ME. IT'S NOT ABOUT HIDING YOU AND YOUR GIRL, HENRY.

YOU JOIN--REALLY JOIN, SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE AND ALL THAT--AND TO THE WORLD AT LARGE, HENRY PRESTON WILL DIE.

HE WILL NEVER VISIT HIS FAMILY; HE'LL NEVER VISIT HIS FRIENDS. HE'LL NEVER PLAY ANOTHER GIG. NO PHONE CALLS TO MOM. NO POSTCARDS. NOTHING.



TO BE A REAL SOLDIER IN THIS WAR,
YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE NOTHING ON THAT SIDE.
THE VICAR, SAM, JOHNNY AND ME, WE'RE FULL
VMS--DEAD AND BURIED ALREADY.

BECAUSE BELIEVE ME,
IF YOU JOIN THE FIGHT, REALLY
JOIN. AND YOU GOT SOMEONE
YOU LOVE OUT THERE, FAMILY,
FRIENDS...THE VAMPS WILL FIND
THEM. FIND THEM AND KILL
THEM.

AND THAT'S
WHAT YOU DID?
YOU GAVE IT
ALL UP?

NO. IT WAS
TAKEN FROM ME BY
VAMPIRES. MY WIFE.
MY WHOLE LIFE. I
WAS A HIGH SCHOOL
SCIENCE TEACHER, IF
YOU CAN BELIEVE
THAT.

THAT'S THE WAY IT
WAS FOR MOST
OF US. JOHNNY.
SAM. THE VICAR.

VAMPIRES TAKE
WHAT YOU HAVE AND
AFTER THAT, WELL,
IT'S AN EASY
CHOICE.

BUT ENOUGH ABOUT
US. WHAT ABOUT YOU,
SERGEANT PRESTON?
HOW'D VAMPIRES COME
INTO YOUR LIFE?

I'M
MARRIED
TO ONE.

COME
AGAIN?

FREEZE!

Mike M. 2011



I MET HIM ON
THE SHIP RIDE OVER
HERE. HIS NAME'S
PIKE, RIGHT?

YES...
BILL PIKE. I... I GOT
SEPARATED FROM MY
PLATOON. THE JAPS,
THEY CAME OUT OF
NOWHERE.



BILL PIKE. STAY HERE. WE
WILL CALL YOUR POSITION
IN ONCE WE GET TO THE
SETTLEMENT.



WE CAN'T
JUST LEAVE
HIM HERE.

HE'S
RIGHT,
JAN.



IF WE FIND WHAT WE
ARE LOOKING FOR,
AND THIS MAN IS
WITH US==

HEY,
VICAR!



SORRY TO
INTERRUPT, BUT
YOU MIGHT WANT
TO TAKE A
LOOK.







LET'S
GO.

THANKS
FOR THAT.

JUST STAY
CLOSE, PIKE.



OH I WILL.
DON'T YOU
WORRY ABOUT
THAT.

"SKINNER,
HE'LL KILL
THEM ALL..."



...HE
PROBABLY
ALREADY
HAS.

MY MEN
ARE QUITE
CAPABLE AT
KILLING YOUR
KIND, MS.
JONES.

IF YOUR
HUSBAND
WARNS
THEM IN
TIME--

HE
CAN'T WARN
THEM.

HE'S
NEVER MET
SKINNER.
HENRY WON'T
KNOW IT'S
HIM.



EVEN
SO.

THERE MIGHT
STILL BE
TIME.



HOW
DO YOU
FIGURE?



IF I MAY, SWEET WOULDN'T
TRAVEL ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE
OCEAN INTO A WAR ZONE JUST TO
TAKE REVENGE ON YOUR HUSBAND
FOR REVEALING YOUR SPECIES'
WEAKNESS TO US.



SWEET
IS FAR TOO
SELFISH FOR
THAT, AS WELL
YOU KNOW.

HE'S
PLAYING AN
ANGLE OF
SOME KIND,
WHATEVER
IT IS.



"...OTHERWISE YOUR MEN
ARE AS GOOD AS DEAD."

EVERYONE STAY
CLOSE. ANY SIGN,
CALL HALT.

SO THEY
LOOK HUMAN,
THIS KIND?

THEY
SHOULD. NO
VAMPS FROM
THIS REGION ARE
KNOWN SHAPE-
CHANGERS.

SEE, I TOLD
YOU. GOOSE
CHASE.

JOHN'S
RIGHT.

JOHN,
NO!

THE HOMES
LOOK ABANDONED. I
THINK WE'RE CLEAR.
WE CAN SET UP
SHOP IN ONE OF THE
HOUSES. JOHNNY,
YOU THINK YOU CAN
GET A SIGNAL?

JOHN?



TAKE IT
DOWN!



I THOUGHT
YOU SAID
HUMAN!

THAT
THING
ISN'T
ON THE
BOOKS!
NEVER
SEEN
ONE!



DAMN. DAMN.
DAMN. WE
GOT TOO
CLOSE.
TOO CLOSE
TO SEE--



--THE
WHOLE TOWN'S
INFESTED!

GHOST WAR

SCOTT SNYDER • RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

DAVE MCCAIG • PAT BROSSAU • JOE HUGHES • MARK DOYLE

AMERICAN VAMPIRE CREATED BY SNYDER & ALBUQUERQUE

AMERICAN VAMPIRE

MARK DOYLE EDITOR

AMERICAN VAMPIRE #14

Hello, guys and gals,

It's late on a rainy Monday, things are quiet in the halls of Vertigo, time to dip into the mailbag...

It has almost been a year since I took a chance on a little comic book written by Stephen King and some other dude named Scott Snyder. It has almost been a year since my life was changed forever.

That little comic book written by Stephen King and some other dude named Scott Snyder became "That AWESOME comic book by Scott Fucking Snyder!" Now I impatiently wait for the calendar to flip each month so I can get my hands on the new issue.

Scott Snyder is pure genius, and Rafael Albuquerque makes carnage look oh, so beautiful.

I love how the world of AMERICAN VAMPIRE seems to just get bigger and bigger with each new story arc. I truly hope this series has the same immortality that a vampire has, and goes on forever! Well... the immortality of a vampire that DOESN'T cross Skinner or Pearl.

Thanks for starting up the letter pages so I could get a chance to write a love letter to AMERICAN VAMPIRE and all who are involved in making AMERICAN VAMPIRE happen each month!

Thanks!

Aron White
Maize, KS

Thanks for writing, Aron. One of our first letters was also a snail mail letter! We don't get much old-timey mail 'round these here parts, so thanks for that! And thanks for reading, man. You're right, the world just gets bigger and bigger, and trust me, we're just getting started...

AMERICAN VAMPIRE is a truly riveting series and has some of the best comics writing I've read in a long time. I was especially engrossed in the second story arc starring Cashel McCogan and company. Absolutely brilliant story and masterfully crafted storytelling. Since then, AMERICAN VAMPIRE's become one of only two titles I currently follow (the other being THE FLASH). Keep up the vampstastic work on the series, 'cause I'm looking forward to finding out where the journey will lead Pearl and Henry, Hattie, and all the other undead characters that people these pages with excitement, gore, and horrifying good artwork.

John T. Trigonis
Jersey City, NJ

Thanks, John. We ALSO loved Cash McCogan. That's why we decided to continue his story in our spinoff miniseries called "AMERICAN VAMPIRE: SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST" in stores this June with incredible art by Sean Murphy!

Just wanted to drop a quick note to say that AMERICAN VAMPIRE has become one of my favorite comics in YEARS! Great art, writing, coloring. It's got it all. The stories are fantastic, and each issue continues to be better and better! Here's to Many, Many More!!

Darsh Davis
New Brockton, AL

Thanks, Darsh! And might I say that I'm a big fan of YOUR work, sir! I love Sith Lords! Never liked that namby-pamby rebel alliance. I mean, how do you get behind a guy who's always whining about "power converters"? Give me a dude who's dressed in black and kicking ass any day! Guess that's why I ended up here at Vertigo...

Seriously though, thanks for writing. I think I recognize your name from the DC Message boards. Thanks for sticking by us!

Dear Mark,

AMERICAN VAMPIRE was my favorite discovery of 2010. Initially intrigued by the participation of Stephen King, it is Snyder and Albuquerque's storytelling that won me over and keeps the book on my list of favorite comics. The vampire is a well-established literary creature that has evolved over centuries of storytelling, and Snyder's skillful exploration of that evolution and changing mythology alone would make AMERICAN VAMPIRE an interesting read. But even more compelling are the characters that he and Albuquerque bring to life - Skinner, Pearl, Henry, Hattie, Chief McCogan, the Book family - all of them are fascinating characters that you think about well after you finish reading the book. Also, Snyder's use of history in AMERICAN VAMPIRE is an invitation to further research; the time periods that he showcases (whether 1920s Hollywood or 1930s Las Vegas) are so realistic and fascinating that I found myself researching those periods online and at the local library.

I would also like to praise the work of colorist Dave McCaig. His colors complement Albuquerque's fantastic art and help create the mood of the book. AMERICAN VAMPIRE has the best combination of art and story of any comic book currently being published, and I look forward to reading future issues.

Reed Beebe
Kansas City, MO

Thanks, Reed. That's really exciting that we drove you to research. Best compliment you can give us. Learn anything cool? Let us know!

I'm really excited for Sean Gordon Murphy's AMERICAN VAMPIRE mini. I am a big fan of his work. I love JOE THE BARBARIAN and I loved his Oni Press book "Off Road." I would really like him to work with creators like Brian Wood. I also want to acknowledge Scott Snyder for his work on AMERICAN VAMPIRE and his current arc of DETECTIVE COMICS. I met them

both at the New York Comic Con and they were the nicest people I've met along with others. I am so excited to see them collaborate. Thanks for reading the letter!

Joshua Wielgosz
Holyoke, MA

Whoa! Look at that! I mention the miniseries at the beginning of the letters column and people are already buzzing about it at the end of the column! Crazy how fast word is spreading... what's that, Joe? Ladies and Gentlemen, let me introduce our new, awesome AMERICAN VAMPIRE Assistant Editor Joe Hughes! <applause> Now what's this you're saying, Joe...? Letters columns don't work like Twitter? Really? That sucks. So why the hell are we doing this again...?

I'm kidding, folks! (Except about Joe. He is awesome. And if you write a letter addressed to him, I'm sure he'd love to hear from you!)

And that's exactly why we're doing this! So we can connect with you the fans in more than 140 characters. So send us your thoughtful praise or criticism. Tell us about an awesome horror novel you just read, or a great, scary new flick. Tell us about the first vampire story you ever read. Hell, send us your hate mail! I don't care, just sit down and write. We love hearing from you!

That's it, folks. Now it's VERY late on a Monday, time for me to punch out. Next Month! More Letters! And more awesome vampire action!

--Mark

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www.dclatterspage.com

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AMERICAN VAMPIRE # 15



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THE HOTLIST



STRANGE ADVENTURES #1

From the far reaches of space to the not so distant future, it's a collection of short stories by the very arbiters of strange. Featuring some of the greatest comic book writers and artists of our time including Peter Milligan, Brian Azzarello, Denis Cowan, Jill Thompson, Scott Snyder, and Jeff Lemire! Exciting new talents make their Vertigo debut in this 80-page. Plus: the Eisner Award-winning team of 100 BULLETS, Brian Azzarello and Eduardo Risso, reunite to bring you the first chapter of their upcoming new series SPACEMAN! Cover by Paul Pope with a variant cover by FABLES artist Mark Buckingham.



SWEET TOOTH #20

NEW STORYLINE! Gus reluctantly joins Jepperd on a hunt for the missing girls, but the tension between the two continues to grow. Meanwhile, Singh and Johnny come face-to-face with a deadly new threat, and Lucy and the girls meet Walter Fish, an enigmatic survivor who may have more to offer than meets the eye. Don't miss snowmobile gangs, yells and more as the new story arc "Endangered Species" kicks off with a bang!



HOUSE OF MYSTERY #36

NEW STORYLINE! "Desolation" starts here, with a short story epic of outer space romance and adventure illustrated by the one and only Darwyn Cooke!

AARON AND AHMED
AMERICAN VAMPIRE #14
AREA 10
CINDERELLA: FABLES ARE FOREVER #3 (OF 6)
DMZ #64
FABLES #104
FABLES VOL. 15: ROSE RED
HELLBLAZER #27B
HOUSE OF MYSTERY #36
IZOMBIE #12
THE NEW YORK FIVE #4 (OF 4)
NORTHERNERS #39
OTHER LIVES
THE SANDMAN VOL. 5: A GAME OF YOU—NEW EDITION
SCALPED #4B
SWEET TOOTH #20
TRANSMETROPOLITAN VOL. 9: THE CURE—NEW EDITION
THE UNWRITTEN #24
VERTIGO RESURRECTED: HELLBLAZER—BAD BLOOD
Y: THE LAST MAN DELUXE EDITION BOOK 5

04.11
THE HIT LIST

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LEDGE

BY JAY CANTOR



JAY CANTOR

is the author of three previous novels, *The Death of Che Guevara*, *Krazy Kat*, and *Great Neck*, as well as two books of essays, *The Space Between: Literature and Politics* and *On Growing Up in One's Own Mother*. A MacArthur Prize Fellow, Cantor teaches at Tufts University and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with his wife, Melinda Marble, and their daughter, Grace.

The morning the planes slammed into the Towers, I was already watching TV. TV is a pal I like to waste a little time with some mornings before (I swear) I walk to my study to work on my novels. That morning, though, the images stopped time, stopped thought. It was fury that got my mind moving again—except that it didn't feel much like my mind anymore. I wanted to gouge out the eyes of the bastards who'd done this. I was on the ledge all right, and I longed to leap down at their throats.

I turned away from the screen, made coffee, asked some questions, because having questions made me feel more like myself. What could transform men into death-machines? What could turn me into a man who wanted to torture? I felt there were forces at work as strong as the potions and spells in fairy tales or comic books, powers that can turn men into meat puppets.

I began to dream the story of AARON AND AHMED. I already knew it would also be about love, because when you know that forces can take over your mind, I think you also pray that there might be one small thing that belongs to you alone—your choice of who to love. Supposing even that belongs to you.

I tried, but I couldn't find a way to tell the story in words. I put it aside. Years later, Pornsak Pichetshote called from Vertigo to ask if I wanted to try writing a graphic novel. I found myself eager to take up AARON AND AHMED again—to tell the story not just with words, like my novels, but with pictures, too. Maybe that was because it was pictures on the TV that had driven me mad that morning. I'd bet when the terrorists had dreamt of those images, they knew they'd change us in just that way. Then they could say to the world, *look, our American enemies are monsters*. I'd bet, too, they'd known that images could take over our minds because—along with the powerful words of old-time religion—some phantasmagoria was at the heart of what had made them murderers in the first place.

My faith was that the poison could also be the cure. The antidote for the pictures and words that program us would be the right pictures—like those of James Romberger—linked to (I hope) the right words. Maybe that could introduce some questions into the mix, get the mind working again, help bring us back from the ledge. The result of my hopes is AARON AND AHMED: A Love Story.

IN MEMORIAM

DWAYNE McDUFFIE

FEBRUARY 20, 1962 – FEBRUARY 21, 2011

We remember him for his groundbreaking work at Milestone Media, for the powerful characters he created and their resonant stories, and for writing about race and ethnic diversity in a way that has been inspirational to us all.

The world of comics has lost a true and influential talent. Our deepest sympathies to his family, friends and fans.



art by Deryn Cowan

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